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CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM

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During a 21-23 August 2001 symposium conducted at the Collins Center of the United States Army War College, a group of 80 subject matter experts examined the evolving policy and infrastructure surrounding Consequence Management. Viewing the issue within the larger construct of Territorial Security, participants concentrated on both interagency and intergovernmental issues associated with this national challenge. In six panels, over two days' time, state, local and federal officials addressed on-going initiatives and remaining shortfalls in this arena. Discussions encompassed interagency coordination; state, local and federal cooperation; and the proper utilization of both active and reserve components of the military. Parallel issues faced by the Regional CINC's, the State Department and their host nation counterparts were also a key part of the symposium.

The United States Army War College's Center for Strategic Leadership and the Center for Strategic and International Studies co-hosted the event. Participants included representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Justice, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, Congress, several research institutes, and emergency management officials from state, city and regional levels. Participants from DoD included representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, U.S. Central Command, U.S. Pacific Command, and the Department of the Army. This paper summarizes the discussions and issues raised at the symposium.

SEARCHING FOR DIRECTION

Great attention is currently being devoted to the topic of consequence management and territorial security. Over 40 agencies in the executive branch claim some degree of responsibility/authority over the issue. As many as 25 different committees of the United States Senate and House of Representatives claim oversight. Their disparate efforts will lead to expenditures of over 11 billion dollars in 2001, yet there is no central agenda over how those funds should be applied, nor a budget authority over how they should be distributed. These conditions sustain a vulnerability the nation can ill-afford. Accordingly, symposium attendees



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recognized three initial imperatives for territorial security: (1) establish an office within the executive branch accountable and responsible for territorial security issues; (2) conduct a threat-risk assessment of domestic vulnerability within the sovereign territory of the United States; and (3) develop a comprehensive strategy for homeland security.

AN “OFFICE OF TERRITORIAL SECURITY”

Participants ranging from state and local “first responders” to the military components that would be called upon to support them were united in their call for the designation of an “agency in charge.” Reflecting the findings and recommendations of the Gilmore and Hart-Rudman Commissions, the CSIS Homeland Defense Project, and several pieces of legislation introduced over the last two sessions of Congress, the symposium joined in the call to clearly establish an office accountable and responsible for coordinating federal agency efforts in the evolving territorial security mission. The head of this agency should be appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, garnering the authority and the liability implied by both. In particular, the director and his agency would exercise budgetary authority over federal efforts to deter, defend and respond against domestic attack. This agency would oversee the mission and functions currently exercised by diverse federal organizations concerned with the issue, provide a degree of “stewardship” over the funding distribution among those organizations, and serve as a national focal point for coordination and cooperation involving federal, state and local domestic preparedness.

A THREAT-RISK ASSESSMENT: FIRST STEP TO PRIORITIZATION

Conferees agreed that a threat-risk assessment must precede the development of a coherent national strategy. While such assessments have been conducted at the state and local levels (though not universally), there has been no corresponding national assessment. This may be partially due to civil liberty issues in the domestic arena that do not exist on the international front, but it was agreed that individual privacy and territorial security cannot be considered as mutually exclusive issues. Other concerns raised in the forum addressed the “worst-case” tendency of some risk-assessments to over-burden domestic agencies in preparing for the “possible,” while leaving the “probable” and “credible” ill-served. The analytical discipline required to circumvent this imbalance should come from the combined efforts of the executive agency charged with territorial security and the national intelligence infrastructure. A crucial product of such a disciplined approach would be a national assessment of capabilities to respond to domestic terrorism, considering the integrated sum of federal, state and local capabilities. Such an assessment could result in prioritization of funding and resources on a more “measured scale,” addressing what one conferee called a “regional” rather than “city” requirement.

THE NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

Symposium participants unanimously agreed on the need for a comprehensive national strategy for territorial security. The strategy would serve as the cornerstone for the intergovernmental coordination of domestic response, considering inter-agency federal, state, and local requirements. With regard to the federal role, the strategy would identify the roles and missions of the diverse agencies addressing different components of the domestic threat. It would identify the fault lines between those agencies and their functions, viewed against a carefully constructed threat-risk assessment, and fill identified gaps with procedures and resources necessary to meet the given threat.

The availability of intelligence across the spectrum of state, local and federal response mechanisms was visited frequently during the course of the symposium. Over-classification and compartmentalization were viewed as a pervasive flaw in the current structure, and one that would have to be addressed in a national response plan. Moreover, the need to synergize this country’s intelligence efforts beyond its traditional international scope, and to incorporate domestic issues such as medical and criminal intelligence, was raised on several occasions.

Beyond intelligence, a vital, and multi-tiered information component to the domestic preparedness issue must be addressed in a national strategy. The role of the media may be essential, not only in responding to events as they occur, but in educating the public in proper response to incidents before they occur. A pervasive domestic threat may well require a degree of behavior modification on the part of the public for its own safety; such modification is neither without precedent nor insurmountable if

facilitated by education through partnership between the government and the media. This partnership would ensure the public trust—a likely center of gravity in response execution.

One of the symposium’s participants reminded the assembly that responding to a WMD incident was no time for representatives of different government agencies to be exchanging business cards. The importance of not only constructing a national strategy, but of exercising its components, especially among agencies without traditional partnerships, was frequently cited. Moreover, the need to expand the exercises to include all levels of government as well as the private sector was also raised. Finally, once training exercises were completed and “lessons learned” compiled, universal access to those lessons among domestic preparedness agencies should be a standard.

The importance of education was a recurring theme in the symposium. Surveillance and early recognition of chemical and biological agents and their effects was deemed essential for “first responders,” including emergency medical and hospital practitioners. Equally important was the requirement to educate elected leadership, to alert them to the scope of the problem without overstating the threat.

THE MILITARY COMPONENT OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

A military strategy for supporting domestic response capabilities cannot precede the national strategy. As one panel member observed, “In the military we don’t do anything until we are given the mission to do it.... Assuming that we would pre-suppose our role without that mission being identified is, at the very least, out of our lane.” Nevertheless, the Department of Defense (DoD) is “leaning forward” in developing policies and procedures (such as the soon to be released CJCS CONPLAN 0500), to provide the National Command Authorities a wide range of military options to assist in the consequence management operations in response to a WMD incident. The role of the military and its limits in territorial security were key issues addressed during the forum.

The Commandant of the Army War College set the tone for this part of the discussion in his welcoming remarks, when he reminded the uniformed participants that “we are not in charge” of this mission. General consensus holds that the DoD will seldom be the lead federal agency in responding to the type of incident addressed in the symposium, whether accidental or intentional. The panels’ presentations suggested that this was precisely as things should be: that the application of the military in domestic response should be carefully defined, limited to capabilities unique to the military, and withdrawn as soon as civil authorities are prepared to resume the mission. One participant suggested that the proper characterization of the DoD’s participation would be “surge capacity”—responding to the kinds of mass mobilization and logistic requirements (security, transportation, command and control, etc) best provided by the military—until the time that an overwhelmed civil sector could re-take the reins. As such, another panel member suggested that responding to such a crisis should always be approached with an “exit strategy” in mind.

While not the lead federal agency in most cases, the military’s role in consequence management remains complex. Whatever the function performed, for instance, the military will always be governed by an absolute and public accountability regarding constitutional principles and civil liberties. Further, while the active duty component may occasionally be called upon in response to a domestic event, the reserve components—with their widespread presence and their combat support and combat service support expertise—are the forward deployed units on the domestic front. Within these, the role of the Guard may prove paramount in the military effort: as one panelist observed, “Even if we accept that it is not a matter of ‘if’ but ‘when’ a WMD incident may occur in the states, ‘where’ remains the other variable. And the only military that is available everywhere is the Guard.”



Even the support role viewed alone portends significant issues for DoD, and particularly for the Army. In a resource- constrained environment, with resources defined by personnel as well as equipment, any additional mission or tasking must be carefully weighed. The question was raised as to whether preparation and training for domestic missions could undermine warfighting capabilities. On a similar note, one participant reminded the audience, “DoD does not have Consequence Management (CM) units; it does, however, have CM-capable units.” In that light, some National Guard representatives warned against assigning the Guard territorial security as a primary function. Component designations aside, pressing concerns remain for the entire Army in determining forces required for territorial security. One presenter raised the question: if a national strategy is developed, will there be an apportionment of forces for territorial security in the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan? And similarly, if territorial security becomes a mission and not merely a tasking, will there be resources assigned to it?

CONCLUSION

Consequence management and the territorial security mission present the National Command Authority with a multi-faceted, multi-tiered requirement that will require both intergovernmental and interagency coordination. Non-traditional partnerships between the civil and military, public and private sectors will be required if we are to achieve the levels of effectiveness and efficiency needed to address a diversity of threats never before encountered on our shores. The key to success for these partnerships will be a central authority capable of fashioning and implementing a credible national strategy, designed to secure our way of life while preserving our liberties.

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